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Title Slide: Introduction to High School Transcript Collections (HSTC)

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This module will introduce users to the NCES' High School Transcript data collections including NLS-72, HS&B, NELS:88, ELS:2002, and HSLs:09. It will provide information about the coding of high school courses and describe the study samples, designs, and data collection. The module will also describe the weights used for each of the transcript studies.

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The High School Transcript Collections are comprised of data from five Secondary Longitudinal Studies: the National Longitudinal Study of 1972 (NLS-72), High School and Beyond (HS&B), National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), and the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09).

Each of the studies' transcript studies shown on the screen will be described in more detail in the following slides.

Note that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has a High School Transcript Study (HSTS) that is not part of the secondary longitudinal studies discussed in this module. To access NAEP's HSTS, please click on the corresponding underlined screen text.

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Each high school longitudinal study starts with a two-stage sample design. First the schools are selected, then students are selected within the schools.

In order to be included in the studies, students must have attended a public or private high school in the U.S. during the base year collection.

Each target population is nationally representative of its cohort. In other words, NELs:88 is nationally representative of 8th-graders, HS&B, NELs and ELS are nationally representative of sophomores, and NLS-72, HS&B, and ELS:2002 are nationally representative of seniors. HSLs:09 differs from all previous cohorts and is the only one that is nationally representative of 9th-graders.

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For each selected student within a selected school, transcripts are collected from students who were cohort members.

School catalogs are also collected from base year schools for some cohorts. This is to enable appropriate coding of the courses on the transcript, using a standardized course classification system.

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High School Transcript Collections gather data on course offerings (from school catalogs), grade point averages (or, GPA), coursetaking patterns, and credit earnings in the nation's schools.

The amount of detail in the transcript collection varies depending on the study. The data collected from students who participated in the secondary longitudinal studies make it possible to link coursetaking patterns to students' educational expectations and motivations, as well as academic performance, as measured by achievement tests administered in each study. A further goal of this connection is to provide data on later student outcomes, such as postsecondary enrollment, coursetaking, and degree attainment.

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Each of the NCES' secondary longitudinal cohorts has high school transcript data available. Most of the transcript data for these studies require a Restricted-use license. Public-use transcript data can be analyzed online through PowerStats and/or downloaded from the Education Data Analysis Tool (or, eDAT) as a public use file, depending on the study.

It's important to note that high school transcript variables in the public-use data files are primarily composite variables.

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Data collection for high school transcript collections of the National Longitudinal Study of 1972 (or, NLS-72), includes the cohort of 1972 high school seniors.

All base year schools were requested to send each student's School Record Information Form (SRIF), which included high school curriculum information, grade point average (GPA), credit hours, class rankings, remedial-instruction record, involvement in certain federally supported programs, and scores on standardized tests.

18,110 SRIFs (from a sample of 18,143) from about 1,070 public and private schools were returned.

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Data collection for the High School Transcript Collections of the 1980 High School and Beyond (or HS&B), yielded a cohort of high school sophomores, including an oversampling of Hispanic and private school students.

All base year schools and transfer schools were requested to send transcripts and course catalogs or student handbooks to aid in the coding of courses, grades, and credits earned.

Transfer schools responded at a lower rate than base year schools at 86% vs. 95%, respectively. Users should note that transfer schools often included a smaller number of students than base year schools.

15,941 sample members' transcripts (from a sample of 18,427) from about 1,900 public and private schools were returned.

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Data collection for the high school transcript collections of the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (or, NELS:88) included a cohort of 1988 8th-graders, 1990 sophomores, and 1992 seniors.

As a note, because of the timing of the transcript collections for NELS, the sample is representative of both seniors in spring 1992 and graduating seniors in the 1991-1992 school term. In addition, the study oversampled Asian, Hispanic, and private school students.

Because of sample dispersion between 8th grade and the second follow-up, a sample of "contextual schools" was selected. By contextual schools we mean schools from which school administrator and teacher data were collected in addition to student data.

All "contextual schools" were requested to send transcripts and school catalogs.

A smaller number of "noncontextual schools" were asked to send transcripts and catalogs if they had students who had dropped out, were alternative completers, or early graduates.

14,290 sample members' transcripts (from a sample of 16,373) from 1,953 public and private schools were returned.

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Data collection for high school transcript collections of the Education Longitudinal Study (or, ELS:2002) included a cohort of 2002 high school sophomores.

All base year schools were requested to send transcripts and school catalogs.

A "bookend approach" was used in which transcripts were requested from the base year school and the last school that transfer students attended.

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Course catalogs were requested for four school years covering 2000–04 from base year schools and for two school years, 2002–03 and 2003–04, from transfer schools.

17,285 sample members' transcripts (from a sample of 19,320) from 1,543 public and private schools were returned.

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Data collection for high school transcript collections of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (or, HSLs: 09) included a cohort of 2009 high school 9th-graders.

Transcript collection was attempted from every school the sample member attended. All base year schools and transfer schools were requested to send transcripts, school catalogs, school information pages with information about grading and graduation policies.

When not sent by the school, course catalogs were downloaded from school and district websites whenever possible.

21,928 sample members have transcripts (from a sample of 23,415) from 3,028 public and private schools.

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Transcript weights were created for each study to account for nonresponse in high school transcript data. The weights are specific to each study and will be discussed in the coming slides.

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Because in NLS-72 the Student Record Information Form (or, SRIF) was attached to the student-level file, weight selection should be the same as student variable information. Therefore, no additional adjustments were made for nonresponse in the SRIF.

When selecting weights for analysis of NLS-72 data, weights that include the base year data should be selected.

There are many weights associated with this data file. For example, W1 is the first of many weights that can be used. W22 includes the Base Year and Fourth Follow-Up. For more information about the weights available for NLS-72, please click on the underlined screen text "weight."

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Weighting procedures for HS&B were devised to take into account differential selection probabilities for sample members and differential response rates for different types of schools and students.

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The basic process for calculating the transcript weights included several steps. Note that this basic process was followed for each of the following cohorts' transcript collections (that is, for NELS, ELS, and HSLS), with slight differences as necessary to adjust for differences in their sample and study designs.

For each sampled student, an initial weight, TRWT, was computed as the product of the First Follow-Up weight (prior to nonresponse adjustment) and the reciprocal of the student's retention probability in the Transcripts study for subsampled cases.

The School's Base Year primary sample type had the most variability in response rates so nonresponse adjustment factors were calculated to adjust for the missing cases and final transcript sample weights were computed.

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The basic weight construction process for NELS was the same as for HS&B. As with previous studies, and with the other sample weights, the NELS:88 weights were adjusted to take into account nonresponse within critical subgroups.

Three weights were designed for analyses using NELS transcript data. F2TRSCWT is suitable for analyzing transcript data pertaining to the high school careers of the NELS second follow-up sample of students, early graduates, and dropouts.

F2TRP1WT was designed for analyses using transcript data in conjunction with the questionnaire and test data for the 1988 and 1992 panel sample.

And, F2TRP2WT was designed for analyses using transcript data in conjunction with the questionnaire and test data for the 1990 to 1992 panel sample.

It is important to remember that while transcript data are inherently longitudinal, spanning four years for most individuals, population estimates generated using F2TRSCWT have specific reference to the spring term of the 1991-1992 school year. Because the NELS sample contains both dropouts and students, and represents three independent grade cohorts viewed in the spring term of 1992, the transcript weight does not inflate the sample to a conventional analysis population. Instead, particular analysis populations must be defined--for example, eighth-grade (or sophomore cohort) dropouts in 1992, high school seniors in 1992, graduating seniors in 1992, 1988 8th-graders in 1992, and so on.

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For ELS:2002 transcript respondents, the weight, F1TRSCWT, was initially computed. Weights were based on the wave of collection, not the specific cohort. Subsequent weights were created with each wave of a longitudinal study, to address nonresponse specific to each wave

It is important to note that 86% of transcript respondents have 4 complete years of high school transcript information so users need to be cautious when including respondents with incomplete transcript information.

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Weights were created to adjust for the presence of high school transcripts. Users should ensure that the correct waves of data needed for analyses are included in the weight. For example, for analyses with variables from the Base Year high school transcripts, F3BYTSCPSWT is the weight that should be used as it was produced for all ELS sample members who responded in the Base Year and in the Third Follow-Up and have a sufficient amount of high school (First Follow-Up) transcript data.

As noted earlier, most transcript data for these studies require a Restricted-use license. Along with the Restricted-use license, users receive The High School Transcript Data File User's Manual for ELS that describes the weights produced for the high school transcripts in more detail.

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For HSLs:09, four weights were initially computed: W3STUDENTTR, W3W2STUTR, W3W1STUTR, and W3W1W2STUTR.

As with previous longitudinal cohorts, more weights will be computed with each subsequent round of data collection. Users should review the most recent data file documentation for HSLs and each study to be sure that they are using the appropriate weights for their analysis.

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This module has introduced users to the NCES' High School Transcript Collections including NLS-72, HS&B, NELs:88, ELS:2002, and HSLs:09. It has provided information about the coding of high school courses and described the study samples, designs, and data collection. The module also described the weights that were created for each study.

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Important resources that have been provided throughout the module are summarized on this slide along with the module's objectives for your reference.

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